

Washington, DC - Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) and approximately two dozen of his House colleagues in the Congressional Progressive Caucus (CPC) this afternoon met with President Obama in the White House for a discussion on health care and U.S. policy in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

"I very much appreciated the opportunity to meet with President Obama in the White House and have an open discussion about two of the most pressing issues facing our country -- health care reform and the need to stabilize Afghanistan and Pakistan and make those countries more secure," Hinchey said. "Quality, affordable health care should be a right in this country, not a privilege. While I wish that we could provide universal coverage so that every single American is covered, I am pleased that we appear to be on the verge of being able to provide many more Americans with reliable health coverage. With regard to Afghanistan and Pakistan, I agree with President Obama that we must use our military and diplomatic resources thoughtfully and intelligently in order to meet our national security objectives of creating real safety and security for Americans at home and abroad."

Hinchey has been a committed cosponsor of legislation to create a single-payer universal health care plan in every Congress since he took office in 1993. The congressman said he is very pleased to see that President Obama is extremely committed to health care reform. The president acknowledged that it is unlikely Congress can pass legislation that provides universal health care through a single payer system, but that Congress must act to provide health coverage to as many of the 46 million Americans who currently lack insurance as possible.

The congressman noted that while he ultimately believes a single payer health care system is the best option for our country, he recognizes that, as President Obama noted, legislation to that extent may not be achievable in this current Congress. As such, Hinchey strongly believes that the final health care reform package must include a public plan option. The congressman recently joined 76 of his CPC colleagues in publicly stating that they believe any comprehensive health care reform legislation that comes before Congress must, at a minimum, include a public plan option that would enable people to buy into a public health insurance program that is on a level playing field with private health insurance plans.

Hinchey said he was very pleased to hear President Obama discuss his comprehensive vision of diplomacy, nation-building and other non-military approaches that will best serve U.S. interests in the region and throughout the world in the long-term.

Hinchey Meets with President Obama at the White House

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